

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of treating or preventing cell death in a warm-blooded animal, comprising administering to said animal a therapeutically effective amount of a peptide comprising the amino acid sequence Val-Asp-Val such that cell death is ameliorated.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide comprises a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein said peptide has a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide is a cyclic peptide.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide contains one or more D amino acids.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide is further conjugated to one or more polypeptides.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide is conjugated to a non-peptide moiety.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein said non-peptide moiety is a sugar.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide further comprises an end group cap.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said end group cap is an ester or an amide.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said peptide is from 3 to 20 amino acids in length.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said cell death is associated with a a neurodegenerative disorder, cardiovascular disease, an immune disease, a neoplastic disorder, an inflammatory disorder, or a viral disease.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said cardiovascular disease is a heart attack or stroke.

14. A method of treating or preventing cell death in a warm-blooded animal, comprising administering to said animal a therapeutically effective amount of a streptokinase peptide that ameliorates cell death, or a derivative or analog thereof.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said peptide comprises the amino acid motif: Val-Asp-Val.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said peptide comprises a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said peptide has a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO:

4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein said cell death is associated with a neurodegenerative disorder, cardiovascular disease, an immune disease, a neoplastic disorder, an inflammatory disorder, or a viral disease.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said cardiovascular disease is a heart attack, stroke, an acute coronary syndrome, heart failure, or hypertensive cardiovascular disease.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein said neurodegenerative disorder is Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's disease, cerebellar degeneration, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

21. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a peptide capable of ameliorating cell death, or a derivative or analog thereof, said peptide comprising the amino acid sequence Val-Asp-Val, wherein said peptide is in a suitable pharmaceutical carrier or diluent.

22. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 21, wherein said peptide comprises a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.

23. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 22, wherein said peptide has a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, SEQ ID NO: 4, SEQ ID NO: 5, SEQ ID NO: 6, SEQ ID NO: 7, and SEQ ID NO: 8.